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## 2 Stories Of OxyContin: Matthew Beyersdoerfer



Reporting **Molly Hughes**

DENVER (CBS4) — When Matthew Beyersdoerfer came home from college one summer, his mother knew something was wrong.

"He was not Matthew. He fought with me all the time. He was angry constantly," Debra Beyersdoerfer remembered, as she sat in her bright, cheerful living room.

But after Matthew returned to school in the autumn, the phone rang one day, and the truth finally came out. Matthew confirmed his mother's worst fears.

"He said, 'I'm about to tell you something that's going to break your heart.'"

Matthew told her that he had started using the drug OxyContin when he went to college. His anger and irritability during summer vacation were the result of his withdrawing from the drug while he was at home. But now that he had returned to school, his involvement in drugs had also returned.

For his mother, the news was devastating. Matthew was the much loved second son in the family. He played sports, picked up the guitar without lessons, excelled at academics. But he had started partying when he went to college.

Then, he landed in intensive care after overdosing on OxyContin. His entire body including his liver and his kidneys started shutting down. Matthew survived that battle...but his war with OxyContin continued. His family was devastated, but no one was more disappointed in Matthew than Matthew himself.

"He told me couldn't even stand to look at himself in the mirror," his mother said sadly. "He was disgusted with himself that he let something get that controlling over him."

After a second overdose and three more weeks in intensive care, Matthew went into rehab where he excelled. His mother felt like he had turned the corner.

"I thought he's really going to do it this time. It's really going to work," she said.

Then, one morning, Matthew didn't call home as he had promised he would. His mother tried all day to reach him. She had a sick feeling that something was wrong.

Finally, in the afternoon, someone picked up the phone in Matthew's apartment. For one moment, Debra Beyersdoerfer felt a sense of relief, just because someone had finally answered the phone. Then she realized that she was talking to a detective.

"He told me there had been an apparent overdose and my son was gone."

Debra Beyersdoerfer's eyes filled with tears as she remembered that afternoon.

"We knew how he would die. We just didn't know when. OxyContin is so devastating and so addictive," she said.


Matthew's parents keep his ashes in an urn. Every year his mother buys him a birthday card, dates it, and places it in a chest where she keeps her favorite Matthew memorabilia.

Matthew's parents also have Daisy, Matthew's black lab, his only companion the night he died. They feel she keeps some connection to their son alive, but she will never replace the smiling younger son they lost.

"A part of us died with him, there's absolutely no doubt about that," she said, her voice

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*"We knew how he would die. We just didn't know when. OxyContin is so devastating and so addictive."*



Matthew Beyersdoerfer  
CBS

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